

Healthy LIVING while aging!



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Combating loneliness, one friend at a time

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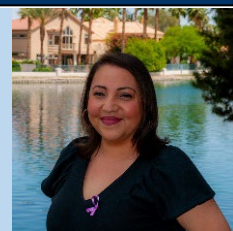
As the crisp air of fall settles in and pumpkins begin to appear, there's no better time to talk about a subject that quietly is on the mind of many older adults and affects their mental health: loneliness. During Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Week, observed from Oct. 1 to 10, we want to pause and shine a light on the silent struggles that can intensify as the days grow shorter and the nights grow longer. While Halloween brings tales of ghosts and goblins, for many seniors, the real fright lies in the isolation that creeps in with age, loss, declining health or life transitions. With the approaching holiday season, it offers a timely reminder that no one — at any age — should feel invisible and alone.

Research shows that older adults who experience loneliness are more likely to be “less healthy, depressed, with lower quality of life and greater medical costs.” There are a variety of risk factors that can lead to loneliness or the general fear of isolation.

If this is starting to sound familiar, and you find yourself with declining networks and changing circumstances that can lead to loneliness, there are a few things you can try to combat the long-term effects.

- ✓ Be a good neighbor – “Boo” your friends, by dropping off a fall treat or gourd. There is a strong possibility they feel the same way you do and will welcome the gesture.
- ✓ Join or start a walking group – Fall is the best time to take walk in the crisp fresh air with new friends.
- ✓ Get involved in your local senior center! Activities from arts and crafts to chair yoga can be a low-cost or free option to make new friends. Many have fun theme nights like Taco Tuesday's and field trips.

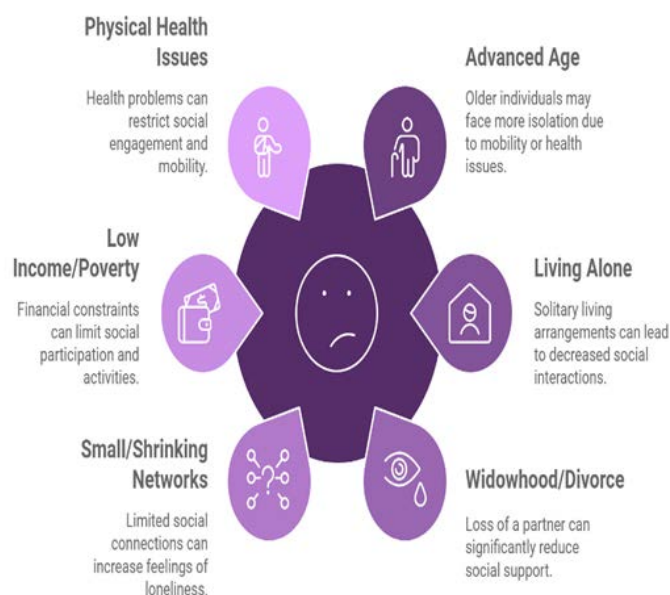
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- ✓ Volunteer, you are greatly needed! There are many volunteer opportunities from your local food bank to your local elementary school. Find one that fits your interest.
- ✓ Random act of kindness – makes you and the person who receives this act feel connected.

More importantly the best way to combat loneliness is to identify it and decide to make a small change in your life to better your mental health. Let's commit to reaching out whether through a smile, a shared walk, or an act of kindness, combating loneliness starts with small but intentional acts. These are all reminders that we're still connected. Let this be the year we turn isolation into inclusion – one friend at a time.

Risk Factors for Social Isolation & Loneliness



Please visit extension.unr.edu/Healthy-Aging to enjoy our accessible, online newsletter and discover additional Healthy Aging education and resources. Or, email HealthyAging@unr.edu.

October is Older Adult Month

October is not only a month for celebrating the unique and diverse experiences of older adults but also for raising awareness about the challenges they face. It is a time to honor the wisdom and resilience of the elderly while promoting their rights and well-being. The month of October is dedicated to the celebration of older adults, providing an opportunity to reflect on their contributions and experiences.

Make Global Handwashing Day Everyday



Follow these steps for effective handwashing to help prevent the spread of germs and keep you and others healthy.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold).
2. Turn off the faucet and apply soap.
3. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with soap.
4. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails.
5. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. If you hum the "Happy Birthday" song twice from beginning to end, that's about 20 seconds!
6. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water and dry your hands with a clean towel or air-dry them.

Halloween Safety Tips for Seniors

Halloween is a fun holiday for people of all ages. However, for older adults, it can come with its own set of unique safety concerns, especially if they live alone.

- 🎃 **Make sure the house is well-lit**
- 🎃 **Decorate with caution**

Health Literacy Month

According to the Center for Disease Control, Personal health literacy is the degree to which individuals can find, understand and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others. Make sure you make smart decisions about your health by:

- Asking Questions – Don't leave your appointment with your questions unanswered.
- Taking Notes – Write things down to help you understand and remember information.
- Bringing Someone You Trust – They can help explain things to you or recall information shared.
- Following up – Call your doctor if you're confused.
- Asking for an Interpreter – Tell the doctor's office what language you prefer when making an appointment.

<https://bit.ly/apt-health-literacy>

Medication Therapy Management

Educate Before you Medicate

The Sanford Center for Aging Medication Therapy Management Program offers comprehensive medication reviews for Nevadans age 60 and older who are taking five or more prescription medications. The reviews are free for everyone, with special priority for low-income, rural and minority participants. Reviews can be done in person or over the phone with our Board-Certified Geriatric Pharmacist, and you will receive a report with recommendations.

Call 775-784-1612 for information

- 🎃 **Choose comfortable costumes**
- 🎃 **Be careful with candle**

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